

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

SUPPORTING SECURE AND AFFORDABLE FOOD AND FIBER



FSA programs promote an abundant and safe food supply.

The result of the FSA financial *safety net* discussed in Strategic Goal 1 is year-round availability of a variety of low-cost, secure, and nutritious foods for all Americans and for food aid recipients worldwide. FSA purchases and delivers food aid to recipients in needy countries who benefit from U.S. humanitarian food aid through the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) programs. FSA also purchases and delivers food aid to recipients of U.S. food distribution programs including:

- The National School Lunch Program,
- The Commodity Supplemental Food Program
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program, and
- The Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.

In addition, FSA supports a secure supply of food and fiber through the administration of the USWA and enforces licensing requirements for commodity storage facilities. FSA reduces contamination from improper storage practices and provides adequate and secure storage capacity for the Nation's commodities. Reducing, controlling, or eliminating agricultural pest and disease outbreaks requires partnerships and a steady stream of new technologies and processes to detect, analyze, and verify the emergence of pests and disease before they become economic or public health threats.

More than 800 million people worldwide, most of them children, suffer from hunger and malnutrition. As the world's leader in distributing food aid and other humanitarian assistance, the U.S. provides more than 50 percent of total worldwide food assistance to combat hunger. Working with USAID and through USDA, American universities, faith-based organizations and other non-profits, FSA will continue to meet immediate food-aid needs, domestically and internationally, while seeking long-term solutions to alleviate global food insecurity.

The protection and safety of the Nation's food production is a constant concern for producers and the industries that transport, store, process, and deliver food products to the public. The Agency's commodity, price, and income support programs continue to be a testament to the country's commitment to maintaining a balanced food and fiber industry. Commodity, price, and income supports help to stabilize American farming and ranching operations.

Privately owned cropland, rangeland, pastureland and forestland form the backbone of the Nation's vibrant agricultural economy. To support a secure and affordable food and fiber supply, FSA identified three strategic objectives and a number of performance measures (efficiency and outcome-oriented) that will increase the probability of achieving the Agency's desired end outcomes.

END OUTCOMES

- Affordable Food and Fiber
- Secure Supply of Quality Food and Fiber
- Effective Food Aid

To achieve these outcomes, FSA will continually work to deliver programs that help America remain the world's leader in delivering an abundant, safe and affordable food and fiber supply to its population. Americans spend less on food as a percentage of their disposable income than any other country in the world, and FSA is working to ensure that the Nation's farmers and ranchers make a decent living while supplying the public with safe, affordable, and diverse choices of agricultural products.

FSA will also work with its partners to secure the Nation's food and fiber supply. Agency staff will work with Homeland Security experts and other USDA agencies to ensure that commodities stored in FSA-approved facilities remain safe. FSA will also do its part to help mitigate food deficiencies in the United States and abroad, and will work to streamline internal processes so that food will continue to reach needy populations on time and according to contract specifications.

FSA will periodically evaluate the effectiveness of its programs to ensure that tax dollars are being used wisely and in direct support of programs that deliver the intended results. While FSA programs contribute to the accomplishment of these strategic end outcomes, the Agency recognizes its influence over them is limited. The end outcome measures listed below are directional in nature and are indicators of FSA's results and performance at the intermediate level. FSA will measure progress at the end outcome level typically every three years, while the Agency's performance in meeting the intermediate objectives will be measured on an annual or quarterly basis, as appropriate, in accordance with GPRA.

END OUTCOME MEASURES

AFFORDABLE FOOD AND FIBER

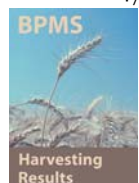
- M1: Sustained global leadership in percentage of disposable income used for food.
- M2: Reduced percentage of acreage permanently converted to non-agricultural use.

SECURE SUPPLY OF QUALITY FOOD AND FIBER

- M1: Reduced percentage of contamination instances resulting from improper storage practices.

EFFECTIVE FOOD AID

- M1: Increased percentage of recipients in food-insecure countries benefiting from U.S. humanitarian food aid internationally.
- M2: Increased percentage of "At Risk" domestic recipients benefiting from U.S. food distribution programs.



INTERMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

SUPPORTING DOMESTIC AGRICULTURE

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- M1: Increase the percentage of agricultural outreach performed through partnerships.
- M2: Increase the percentage of FSA employees demonstrating understanding of FSA programs and responsibilities through training and certification.

Due in part to the USDA Service Center initiative and FSA's extensive presence in rural areas, many stakeholders view this Agency as the frontline or the "face" of the USDA. During the development stage of this Plan, farmers and ranchers expressed concern for the future of American agriculture and encouraged FSA to "do more to promote domestic agriculture." FSA listened to their pleas. The Agency is taking steps toward strengthening partnerships with other USDA agencies – CSREES and NRCS – State Departments of Agriculture, agricultural trade groups, and community- and faith-based organizations to help promote domestic agriculture to the American public, and especially to the Nation's youth. There was a general sense among the stakeholders that "American agriculture is on the decline" and that farming is not an option for today's youth because of poor returns on investment and lack of public appreciation for agriculture.

How can this be the case when agriculture is such a vital part of this Nation's economy? The answer lies in urbanization, industrialization, and the trend toward larger farming operations. Throughout much of the history of the United States, agriculture and education have been closely related. During the decades when most Americans lived on farms or in small towns, Americans understood the importance of a strong and vibrant agricultural sector. They understood the impact that agriculture had on their daily lives, but as the farm population shrank in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s and agricultural emphasis decreased in school books and educational materials, Americans, especially those living in urban areas, became disconnected from their food source. With increased urbanization came a corresponding decrease in the appreciation and understanding of agriculture. FSA is working to reverse this trend by increasing agricultural awareness and promoting domestic agriculture. FSA is working to strengthen its relationships with CSREES, the agency responsible for the national *Agriculture in the Classroom* program (<http://www.agclassroom.org/>) and the State and local organizations that help deliver this program and its agricultural awareness curriculum to American students.

Additionally, FSA will continue to work with agricultural producers to help them adapt to the ever-changing trends in consumer preferences. It has become obvious over the past decade that Americans' tastes and food preferences are changing. As trends in food consumption change, the Nation's farmers and ranchers must be ready and equipped to adapt to these changes. FSA will do its part to help ensure that American farmers and ranchers have the capacity and ability to satisfy changing demands for agricultural products. The marketplace has room for organic foods, health foods, and pre-packaged convenience foods, and the agricultural sector must be poised to meet these ever-changing consumption trends. Food safety is rapidly becoming an issue for the American public, and FSA will work with its agricultural partners to ensure that Americans continue to enjoy a safe and affordable food and fiber supply.



PROVIDING ADEQUATE, SECURE STORAGE CAPACITY THAT MAINTAINS QUALITY

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- M1: Maintain or increase the percentage of capacity of approved and licensed storage facilities.
- M2: Reduce the percentage of warehouses with violations.

FSA plays a vital role in providing a secure supply of quality food and fiber through its stewardship of Agency-administered programs. FSA's past security efforts focused on ensuring the adequate capacity of approved and licensed storage facilities, minimizing warehouse violations, and reducing the amount of stored products that go out of condition. However, the events of September 11, 2001, placed even greater responsibilities on FSA to secure America's food supply. Now, due to the threat of terrorism, FSA cannot limit itself to administering programs based solely on narrowly focused food safety models. Instead, the Agency must expand its focus by developing more comprehensive security models to meet the challenges of today's environment. Therefore, FSA is implementing innovative programs and establishing partnerships with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to manage these new and dangerous challenges.

In working with DHS, the Agency is taking an active role in developing comprehensive, written Homeland Security requirements. FSA communicated requirements for completing a risk assessment and developing a Homeland Security Plan to warehouse operators in 2004; therefore, FY 2005 will be used as the baseline for this measure. Targets will be established once the baseline is determined. Additionally, FSA will conduct an internal risk assessment, scheduled for completion in 2005, to identify additional vulnerabilities of USDA commodity inventories and to develop countermeasures that improve the security of such commodities. FSA will update Homeland Security requirements based on the risk assessment findings.

IMPROVING THE PURCHASE AND DELIVERY OF FOOD AID

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- M1: Reduce the percentage of short-filled contracts.
- M2: Increase the percentage of food aid delivered within contract specifications.

A dynamic, global, agricultural market looms on the horizon and presents enormous opportunities for the agricultural industry. To help farmers and ranchers exploit these opportunities, FSA is positioning itself to work more effectively by administering domestic agricultural programs that will increase the percentage of recipients in food-insecure countries. FSA also aims to increase the percentage of "at-risk" domestic recipients benefiting from U.S. food distribution programs from agencies like the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other Federal, State, and private agencies' food assistance programs.

FSA has an excellent track record for delivering its agricultural products on time and within contract specifications. However, FSA can still improve performance by reducing the instances where shipments fell short of expectations regarding the quality or quantity of food delivered. To improve the purchase and delivery of food aid, FSA is executing internal practices that should reduce the percentage of such short-filled contracts, thus improving the delivery of food aid to needy recipients. Additionally, FSA is working to indirectly increase domestic recipients benefiting from U.S. food distributions and goodwill programs by more effectively managing contracts that support the delivery of food products.



MEANS AND STRATEGIES

To achieve the objectives under this Goal, FSA will continue to:

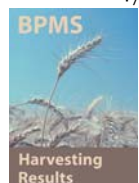
- Increase national training of Farm Programs;
- Employ a temporary detail of program specialists in areas of need using a train-the-trainer model;
- Administer the USWA to provide a safe, secure supply of food and fiber;
- Work with other USDA agencies, USAID, non-profit organizations, and American universities to meet immediate food aid needs while seeking long-term solutions to improve global food security;
- Provide commodity, price, and income support to stabilize American farming and ranching operations; and
- Increase the amount of agricultural outreach performed through partnerships and take steps to increase employee understanding of FSA programs and responsibilities through training and certification.

FSA will also continue to build its partnerships and work in concert with various agencies to deliver a variety of low-cost, secure, and nutritious foods for needy Americans and food aid recipients worldwide through the following programs and program authorities:

- National School Lunch Program,
- Commodity Supplemental Food Program,
- Emergency Food Assistance Program,
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations,
- Public Law 480 Title II and III Programs,
- Food for Progress,
- Global Food for Education, and
- Section 416(b) of the Agricultural Act of 1949, as well as others.

For homeland security, FSA will continue to:

- Require that warehouse operators conduct risk/vulnerability assessments of their facilities and establish procedures that include measures to protect commodities stored under storage and license agreements; and
- Require suppliers of commodities, products, and/or services to be responsible for placing seal(s), meeting criteria established by FSA, on all doors for each transportation conveyance upon completion of loading or servicing. The seal number(s) shall be entered on the bill of lading which must be signed or acknowledged by the carrier or its agent.



EXTERNAL FACTORS

External factors that will challenge FSA's ability to achieve its desired outcomes and program results under Goal 2 include:

- Domestic and international macroeconomic factors, including consumer purchasing power, the strength of the U.S. dollar and competing currencies, and political changes in other countries that can significantly influence domestic and global markets;
- Continued low commodity prices worldwide;
- Global competition in the export sector;
- Lack of collaboration between the public and private sectors that play a large role in food safety, security, and emergency preparedness;
- Adverse weather conditions; and
- Lack of funding for developing and implementing proposed electronic program delivery initiatives.

